



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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District Man Sentenced to 10 Years in Prison In September 2010 Slaying in Southeast Washington - Defendant Pled Guilty to Involuntary Manslaughter, Weapons Charges -

WASHINGTON - Damon Sams, 23, was sentenced today to 10 years in prison after earlier pleading guilty to charges of involuntary manslaughter and possession of a firearm during a crime of violence in a slaying that took place in September 2010 in Southeast Washington, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Sams, of Washington, D.C., also known as "Milli" and "9-Milli," pled guilty to the felony charges in May 2011 in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. He was sentenced by the Honorable Gerald I. Fisher to five years on the involuntary manslaughter count, and five years on the firearms count, the two sentences to run consecutively.

The government's evidence indicated that Sams did not intend to shoot the victim, Ashley McRae, or discharge the firearm. According to the government's evidence, on September 18, 2010, at 3:30 a.m., Sams shot Ms. McRae, 21, once in the forehead while she was in the back seat on the driver's side of a car parked behind a building in the 2700 block of Bruce Place SE.

At the time of the shooting, Sams was standing in the space created by the open rear passenger door of the car, with a pistol in his hand. By his account, he was attempting to engage the safety on the pistol before getting into the car. He touched the trigger to see if the safety was on – while holding the pistol pointed into the car. A round discharged, killing the victim.

Sams already had fired the pistol that night, shortly before killing McRae, and no reasonable person could have thought it would be safe to touch the trigger with a pistol pointed in the direction of another person. Earlier that night, Sams had fired the pistol into the air out of anger at an incident at a club in Maryland, involving unrelated individuals.

In announcing today's sentencing, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the work of the Metropolitan Police Department's Homicide Branch, Mobile Crime Laboratory and Seventh District detectives' office, as well as Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas (Pat) Martin, who investigated and obtained an indictment in the case, Victim Advocate Marcey Rinker, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel Friedman, who handled the guilty plea and sentencing.

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